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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Letter dated 24 May 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group at the United Nations in New York, I have the honour to transmit herewith a communiqué issued by the Group on 24 May 2007 concerning the serious developments in the occupied Palestinian territory (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex were to be urgently distributed as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 13 and 14, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Munir **Akram**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

07-35990 (E) 300507

Annex to the letter dated 24 May 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Group expresses its grave concern at the deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and condemns in specific the recent aggression by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population. Intense military attacks by the Israeli occupying forces, particularly against civilian areas throughout the Gaza Strip, have resulted in the killing and injuring of dozens of Palestinians, including children, and widespread destruction of property. This excessive and indiscriminate use of force by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinian civilians constitutes a grave breach of international humanitarian law and threatens to completely destabilize the already fragile and tense situation on the ground and worsen the dire humanitarian conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The OIC Group demands the immediate cessation of these military attacks by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. Further, the OIC Group calls upon both sides to abide by the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and to immediately extend it to the West Bank in order to bring an end to the cycle of violence and promote calm.

The OIC Group calls upon the Security Council, which is the organ entrusted with the maintenance of the peace and security, to assume its responsibilities to help bring an immediate cessation of this latest Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and to consider mechanisms for the maintenance of the ceasefire. In this regard, the OIC Group urges the Security Council to seriously consider the deployment of observers to monitor respect of the ceasefire.

The OIC Group urges all concerned parties to exert the necessary efforts to work together to stop the bloodletting and destruction and the continuing deterioration of this crisis. The cessation of this grave situation is imperative for preserving the hopes for peace that have recently arisen, in particular following the renewal of the important Arab Peace Initiative, and promoting the calm and stability needed for the pursuit of a peaceful, just and final settlement to this tragic conflict.